

Non-Secure Item*Non-Secure Item***Non-Secure Item***Non-Secure Item**
ISTEP+ Applied Skills Sample for Classroom Use
ELA – Grade 6
(Constructed-Response, Extended-Response)

Excerpt from *The Wind in the Willows*

by Kenneth Grahame

The River Bank

Introduction: Mole loses patience with spring cleaning and decides to leave his home for a while. He ends up by the river, where he meets an interesting character.

1 As he sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water's edge, caught his eye, and dreamily he fell to considering what a nice snug dwelling-place it would make for an animal with few wants and fond of a bijou¹ riverside residence, above flood level and remote from noise and dust. As he gazed, something bright and small seemed to twinkle down in the heart of it, vanished, then twinkled once more like a tiny star. But it could hardly be a star in such an unlikely situation; and it was too glittering and small for a glow-worm. Then, as he looked, it winked at him, and so declared itself to be an eye; and a small face began gradually to grow up round it, like a frame round a picture.

2 A brown little face, with whiskers.

3 A grave round face, with the same twinkle in its eye that had first attracted his notice. Small neat ears and thick silky hair.

4 It was the Water Rat!

5 Then the two animals stood and regarded each other cautiously.

6 "Hullo, Mole!" said the Water Rat.

7 "Hullo, Rat!" said the Mole.

8 "Would you like to come over?" enquired the Rat presently.

9 "Oh, it's all very well to *talk*," said the Mole, rather pettishly, he being new to a river and riverside life and its ways.

10 The Rat said nothing, but stooped and unfastened a rope and hauled on it; then lightly stepped into a little boat which the Mole had not observed. It was painted blue outside and white within, and was just the size for two animals; and the Mole's whole heart went out to it at once, even though he did not yet fully understand its uses.

11 The Rat sculled smartly across and made fast. Then he held up his forepaw as the Mole stepped gingerly down. "Lean on that!" he said. "Now then, step lively!" and the Mole to his surprise and rapture found himself actually seated in the stern of a real boat.

¹**bijou**: something highly prized

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12 “This has been a wonderful day!” said he, as the Rat shoved off and took to the sculls again. “Do you know, I’ve never been in a boat before in all my life.”

13 “What?” cried the Rat, open-mouthed: “Never been in a — you never — well I — what have you been doing, then?”

14 “Is it so nice as all that?” asked the Mole shyly, though he was quite prepared to believe it as he leant back in his seat and surveyed the cushions, the oars, the rowlocks, and all the fascinating fittings, and felt the boat sway lightly under him.

15 “Nice? It’s the *only* thing,” said the Water Rat solemnly, as he leant forward for his stroke. “Believe me, my young friend, there is *nothing* — absolute nothing — half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. Simply messing,” he went on dreamily: “messing — about — in — boats; messing —”

16 “Look ahead, Rat!” cried the Mole suddenly.

17 It was too late. The boat struck the bank full tilt. The dreamer, the joyous oarsman, lay on his back at the bottom of the boat, his heels in the air.

18 “— about in boats — or *with* boats,” the Rat went on composedly, picking himself up with a pleasant laugh. “In or out of ‘em, it doesn’t matter. Nothing seems really to matter, that’s the charm of it. Whether you get away, or whether you don’t; whether you arrive at your destination or whether you reach somewhere else, or whether you never get anywhere at all, you’re always busy, and you never do anything in particular; and when you’ve done it there’s always something else to do, and you can do it if you like, but you’d much better not. Look here! If you’ve really nothing else on hand this morning, supposing we drop down the river together, and have a long day of it?”

19 The Mole waggled his toes from sheer happiness, spread his chest with a sigh of full contentment, and leaned back blissfully into the soft cushions. “*What* a day I’m having!” he said. “Let us start at once!”

Source: <http://www.kellsraft.com/WindInTheWillows/WindInTheWillowsCh01.html>

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Passage: The Wind in the Willows			
Content Standard: 6.RL.2.2: Determine how a theme or central idea of a work of literature is conveyed through particular details; provide a detailed, objective summary of the text.			
Item Type: Constructed-Response	Pts: 2	DOK: 3	Grade: 6

Describe a theme of the excerpt from *The Wind in the Willows* and how it is revealed. Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

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Passage: The Wind in the Willows			
Content Standard: 6.W.3.3: Write narrative compositions in a variety of forms that – <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Engage and orient the reader by developing an exposition (e.g., <i>describe the setting, establish the situation, introduce the narrator and/or characters</i>).● Organize an event sequence (e.g. <i>conflict, climax, resolution</i>) that unfolds naturally and logically, using a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.● Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.● Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.● Provide an ending that follows from the narrated experiences or events.			
Item Type: Extended-Response	Pts: 8	DOK: 4	Grade: 6

At the end of the excerpt, Mole and Rat start off on their boat trip down the river. Imagine what happens. Based on what you have read about the characters and the setting, write a narrative that tells what happens during the journey down the river. You do not need to rewrite the beginning of the excerpt.